

SACRAMENTO ETHNIC COMMUNITIES SURVEY

PORTUGUESE

Date: February 22, 1984  
Place: 1048 - 37th Street

Subject: LORRAINE D'ALESSANDRO

Interviewer: Joe D'Alessandro

- :00 Introduction
- :40 Discusses birth on October 22, 1917 at Mercy Hospital at 21st & R Streets in Sacramento. Lived in Sacramento's Pocket area on the same farm that her father was born on and that her grandfather bought in 1862.
- 1:30 Went to the Upper Lisbon Elementary School. Has one sister, Evelyn. Helped on family farm and enjoyed it very much.
- 2:25 Farm was 40 acres and was a truck farm. Sold their cream and milk to Crystal Creamery.
- 3:00 Sold vegetables in Sacramento at Levi Zetner on North 16th Street.
- 3:50 Her Father was Joseph Perry who was born in the Pocket area in 1877. Her mother was Josie Marcelino Marshall who was born in Newcastle.
- 4:40 Her grandparents immigrated to the U.S. from the Portuguese Azores Islands in the mid 1850's.
- 5:20 The family was large with many cousins and they had many get togethers.
- 5:50 She also has a sister and brother that both died as infants. Her sister Evelyn was born in 1913.
- 6:30 She went to the Upper Lisbon School. One teacher would teach all eight grades, was a one room schoolhouse with around 50 students.
- 7:20 They were almost exclusively Portuguese students until the 1920's when substantial numbers of Japanese students began to move into the area.
- 8:00 Most of the people in the area were farmers. Some worked in the Brickyards. There were many farmworkers. Businesses included the DaRosa Grocery Store, Enos Service Station, Pimentel Saloon.
- 9:10 Discusses the Portuguese Holy Ghost Festa which is the main social and religious event of the Portuguese. People came from Freeport, Natomas and Folsom to the Pocket Festa. They ate "Sopas e Carne".
- 10:15 She was queen of the Pocket Festa two times which was a great thrill. She had two aids and there would be a procession to church. She carried the crown. There would be a blessing of the food. A big honor.
- 12:00 They would make their own dresses for the Festa. Today the Festas are a much bigger deal than before.
- 12:45 Her parents took part in the Festa. Then as they grew older they would help too. They helped serve.
- 13:20 She wishes that she could go back to that period. They had everything that they needed. Life was good. Her dad build a softball diamond for the neighborhood kids at the front of their ranch. The neighbors were all very close.

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- 14:10 Their house burnt down one spring day when she was four years old. Her father was able to save the family but not the house. But the neighbors all got together to help them start again.
- 15:00 After graduating from elementary school she went to St. Joseph's Academy in Sacramento, a Catholics girls's High school. To get to & from school she would have to walk about 7 miles from the end of the street car line to her house but she only had to walk twice in four years because there was always someone who would pass by to give her a ride. She took all basic subjects and sports.
- 17:00 Not that many young women from the Pocket area went there.
- 17:50 She was very active in school activities. She, a poor farm girl, ran for student body president against a sorority girl from town. She was the underdog but she won.
- 19:40 After High School she went to work for Montgomery Wards.
- 20:10 The Depression on the farm wasn't that bad. They didn't have money, sometimes not even a dime, but they were able to grow their own food and survive. Her mother sewed their clothes and often took old clothes apart to make new ones. The prices at the market to sell their produce were very low.
- 22:10 Met her husband, Americo D'Alessandro, at a soccer game at Southside Park. Her friend, a Portuguese girl, was dating an Italian boy who was Americo's best friend. They got them together. They neighbors gave him a hard time since he was a boy from town dating a Pocket girl.
- 24:00 They were married on November 25, 1937 and have four children; Antoinette, Paul, Susan and Joseph. They have 8 grandchildren, soon to be nine, and one greatgrandchild that was born two days ago.
- 25:00 Lorraine's employment history included Montgomery Wards, Mercy Hospital, the Hoff Brau (nights), and Bank of America. In 1959 she was asked to take over a portion of the food consession at the Elks Temple at 11 & K. As business grew she was asked to take over the entire catering operations. Had huge banquets and weddings. Her husband, who was a photographer, also helped her.
- 26:25 Served over 1000 people in a day. Had many civic organizations and many Portuguese weddings.
- 27:00 In 1970 she bought Lorraines Ice Cream Parlor at 2815 J Street in Sacramento. In 1974 her husband retired and they decided to sell it so that they could travel.
- 27:40 She was one of the very few women who owned and operated large catering businesses in Sacramento.
- 28:35 In 1974 she went to Europe (Italy and Portugal). When they returned they helped their son and his friend open "Americo's Trattoria Italiana" at 20th & Capitol in Sacramento.
- 29:30 In 1982<sup>78</sup> went to the Azores and saw the family home for the first time. There are no relatives left since the family left so long ago but it was a thrill to see her ancestral home.

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30:30 She was in Lisbon during the Portuguese Revolution in 1974. It was quite an exciting and interesting ordeal. There were tanks and soldiers in the streets. Few shots were fired and few were hurt.

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:00 Even though both of her parents were born here, they always spoke Portuguese at home. Her and her sister grew up speaking Portuguese but after her father died in 1944 they no longer spoke it and now, even though she understands it, she speaks little.

1:00 She didn't feel much discrimination being Portuguese. The Portuguese community was a big close-knit community. There were businesses, etc. Her family didn't discriminate against others.

2:10 She still participates in the Festas and is still active in Portuguese community activities. She is the treasurer of the Portuguese Historical and Cultural Society and is the co-chairman of the International Friendship luncheon of the Portuguese Camellia Festival committee.

4:50 Her children still participate in the Festas.

5:30 She is proud to be Portuguese. The families are large and close-knit. They keep in touch and get along.